



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

XX. *Description of a Játrá, or Fair, which takes place annually at the Hot Wells, about fifty miles in a South-Easterly direction from Súrat. By the late Dr. WHITE.*

(Communicated by the BOMBAY BRANCH of the ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.)

Read 21st of January 1832.

Súrat, 22d of April 1810.

CURIOSITY to be a spectator of the celebration of a religious ceremony, which was reported to draw together annually from 100,000 to 200,000 persons, led me to the resolution of visiting the Hot Wells, situated at the foot of the hills, about fifty miles in a south-easterly direction from this city.

The place is vulgarly called *Ūnei*, or in full, and more definitely, *Dévaki-Ūnei*, i.e. "the Divine Heat," from a provincial vocable signifying 'heat,' but in Sanscrit and the *Purána*, which records the fable of its history, *Ushna-udaki*, a compound from *Ushna* warm and *Udaka* water.

The waters are resorted to annually at the full moon of *Chaitra*, which occurred this year (1810) on the 19th of April, at which period alone the temperature of them is affirmed by the Bráhmans to be miraculously lowered for the purpose of enabling the pious devotee to avail himself of their holy and purifying influence in the form of a bath. This belief, as well as that of its divine origin, has attached to this natural phenomenon a veneration of the most profound description, and a train of circumstances minutely recorded in the *Scanda Purána*, with all that extravagance of fiction and wildness of fable, characteristic of Hindú mythology, impresses the minds of the natives with respect and awe, and conciliates that facility of credence which they so readily bestow upon all their religious histories. The sum of the particulars, as recorded to have happened at a very remote period, is as follows :

SÍTÁ, the wife of RÁMA, or RÁMA CHANDRA the seventh *Avatára*, having been stolen by the demon RÁVANÁ, in the form of a beggar, near Nashuk Trimbuck, the hero, by the advice of the *Rishis*, resolved on performing a

yajna or sacrifice, as a previous step to attempting her recovery by force of arms. At this time he had arrived at the village of *Anadipura pattan*, (now called Anaval, (a *cós* from the wells), in search of his wife. The want of Bráhmans to officiate at the *yajna* obliged him to send his *Dúta* (envoy) HANU'MÁN to the banks of the *Gangá*, for a supply of the holy ministers. These on being summoned objected to emigrate, as they would be deprived of the sacred water, but their scruples were removed by the princely messenger, who insisted on his master's power to supply the deficiency, or create a substitute. On the arrival of 18,000 of them (miraculously transported by HANU'MÁN) and their asking for the means of ablution, RÁMA let fly an arrow on the ground, and the production of the hot springs was the immediate effect. He further excited their astonishment at the phenomenon, by alleging that a peculiar snake (*S'ésha Nága*) communicated the heat by his breath. The *Purána* adds, that on the Bráhmans refusing the offer of a pecuniary reward for their services, the god, being filled with wrath, pronounced their permanent doom to till the ground and live by the sweat of their brow, and accordingly to this day they practise their agricultural labours, as well as persist in refusing benefactions from any quarter. They are denominated the *Bhátéla* tribe, and do honour to their religion by their industry and diligence.

They indeed hold an inferior rank to the other Bráhmanical tribes, and agreeably to Hindú etiquette the estimation in which they are held is proportionably less, but as this inferiority arises only from the omission of certain ceremonies, and their ignorance of the *S'ástra*, it is rather artificial than essential, and their general probity and application to agricultural pursuits entitle them, in the eye of reason, to a very elevated rank in the scale of civilized communities. Their humble labours are the source of life and comfort to their lordly namesakes of the sacerdotal class, who have only the privilege of idleness, and the arbitrary pretensions of prescriptive custom, to oppose to such substantial merit. It is true that they do not observe the preliminary ablutions before every meal, and have recourse to the bath only once a day, which they find fully adequate for all the purposes of health and cleanliness. Like Caro of old also, they do not think the practice of the severer virtues can be injured by the moderate excitement of vinous beverage, and to this they add the forbidden inhalation of the fumes of tobacco. They are rarely found to the northward of the *Narbada*, or to the southward of *Gandaví*; and they are most numerous as we recede from

these boundaries, and approach the central spot of their first settlement, *viz.* *Anadipura*, the modern Anaval.

In prosecution of the purpose above stated we left Súrat on the 15th of April, and reached the wells on the 17th in the afternoon. The face of the country traversed in three days march had no features distinguishing it from the champaign appearance of Gujerat in general. It was studded here and there with villages, and these most commonly surrounded with a similar description of trees and shrubbery. Among the former the *Mango* (*Mangifera Indica*), *Nim* (*Melia Azadirachta*), Banyan trees, such as the *Vatá* or *Bar'* (*Ficus Bengalensis*), and *Pippala* (*F. Religiosa*) were most frequent and nearly in equal proportions. The *Bér* (*Zizyphus Jujube*) both as a tree and its dwarf variety, were also frequent. The fruit of this is the true *Lotos* of the ancients, which is indigenous in most parts of India, but arrives at the greatest perfection in Gujerat. Here and there a solitary group of *Palmyras* or the *Túla* tree (*Borassus flabelliformis*), reared their majestic heads and agreeably diversified the scene. The waste spaces along the roads, the angles and sides of the fields were thickly set with the wild date and the *Báwal* (*Mimosa Arabica*); the latter from its crowded state and the great demand for firewood, seldom reaching its full stature. We passed four considerable streams, all with classical titles, and each the subject of some peculiar fable of the adventures of heroes or demigods. Their names are, 1st. *Mandakini*, at Malecpur, twelve *cós* distant; 2d. *Purna*, at Manha, six *cós* further on; 3d. A sister branch, and with the same name, at Vulvarra, twenty-five *cós* from Súrat. Three *cós* more brought us to the fourth, *Amòica*, near to its descent from the hills, where it winds round the *Ushna-ulakí*. The two first had broad sandy channels and high banks. The two latter were intercepted by rocks and rocky islands, which, with the aid of alluvial contributions, had attracted a variety of shrubs and stunted trees, thereby presenting a picturesque and pleasant landscape.

During this trip the thermometer generally rose to 93° at noon, and 97° at three P.M.; at six A.M. it dropped gradually as we approached the hills from 80 to 70 at the village of Veval, within two *cós* of the wells. As we proceeded, the increasing crowd of pilgrims from the converging lines of their respective routes, all rejoicing and inspired with a cheerful anticipation of the purifying virtues of the waters, bestowed upon the scene an appearance of bustle and gaiety of the most exhilarating kind.

A distant and confused murmur announced the vicinity of the *Játrá*, and

soon afterwards a number of huts, in all stages of preparation, formed of the verdant materials so abundantly furnished by the contiguous woods, saluted and gratified the sight. The decorum, harmony, and peaceable demeanour which pervaded the assembled multitude, though in a constant state of motion and various degrees of fluctuation, created a most favourable impression of the Hindú character. Their moderation and orderly habits cannot be better illustrated than by the fact, that during the seven days of the *Játrá* no act of violence or theft was heard of. The *tout ensemble* of this exhibition presented a picture on which the mind delighted to repose, and, by generating kindred associations, carried it back to the golden age, when the mutual confidence of men superseded alike the curb of law and the regulations of police; a state of society which the Hindús ascribe to the *Avatára* of their beloved RÁMA, the author of the miracle whose anniversary they were now celebrating.

The streets, being solely allotted to shops, were constructed on a very simple plan, and, following the custom of most Hindú towns, were very narrow. The main street skirted semicircularly round the wells as a centre, and was about a quarter of a mile in length: from this two or three led down to the wells, two or three more were extended from the opposite side into the fields, and the spaces comprised within these limits were filled up with the visitors, variously grouped, but chiefly by castes and villages, while others were dispersed more irregularly, as the shade of lofty trees or clumps of shrubbery at different distances had attracted their choice.

The general mode of association appeared to be, as observed above, by castes and villages; and sometimes a slight outline of thorny branches pointed out the stations of the more respectable parties, composed of Bráhmans and wealthy Banyans. Artizans of every description improved their pious errand by bringing along with them different wares, the produce of their own industry, the sale of which communicated to the scene of devotion a degree of sprightliness and complacency highly animating.

This admixture of profane and sacred pursuits added to the number of visitors a great many individuals entirely unconnected with the ceremony. The greater proportion of the last consisted of Parsís and Musalmáns: the former, as customary, had solely engrossed the sale of spirituous and intoxicating liquors, and seemed to reap a plentiful harvest from the deplorable attachment of the inferior castes to that kind of intemperance. Several companies of jugglers, musicians, and dancers contributed their efforts to

enliven the scene. Religious anchorets, of various descriptions and designations, were seen strolling about, and a band of pure Gymnosophists (*Sannyâsis*) paraded in the crowd without feeling themselves, or exciting in the minds of the mixed multitude, the smallest idea of immodesty. Referring to European habits of decency, this may be considered as a striking example of the influence of manners and education over those associations of sentiment which define the limits of virtue and vice; and here it may be remarked, that such instances of Indian customs may have given rise to the unfavourable and immoral constructions expressed in the first notices of India handed down to us by the father of history, the venerable and veracious HERODOTUS.

The shops were stored with commodities equal in quality and variety to those of the large towns in Gujerat. On some stands were exposed to sale grapes brought all the way from Aurungâbâd (a distance of two hundred miles by the road), in high perfection, and of a delicious degree of maturity.

The hot wells, which are the *primum mobile* of all the crowd and celebrity above described, though of little external show, and their temperature, are now to be spoken of. In the *Brâhmana Cund'a*, or tank, which is a place faced with stone, measuring about forty feet by thirty, the thermometer stood at 111° of Fahrenheit; but on one side of this space there was a small square of wood-work enclosing the chief spring, and here the heat rose to 115°: the average depth of the *Cund'a* was three feet. About twenty yards distant was the *Dhêra Cund'a*, so called from the caste to whose use it was exclusively allotted. The size of this was about seventy feet by fourteen; but the heat was 120°, which prevents the visitors from making use of it as a bath, and the substitution of ablution by small pot-fulls is had recourse to.

As the religious prejudices of the natives are particularly flattered by the belief of miracles, the priests have not neglected the application of this principle in the present instance; for they affirm, and implicit credit is given to their *ipse dixit*, that it is precisely on the day of the full moon of this month *Chaitra*, and on no other in the course of the year, that the water becomes diminished in temperature to such a degree, as to admit of the performance of the rites of purification by the pilgrims.

The harmless tendency of this and similar opinions renders their refutation neither a matter of moment nor interest. Indeed the imputation of

moral blame, if not cruelty, might attach to any serious design of unveiling a deception which is accompanied with nothing positively vicious, while, on the contrary, it proves an abundant source of joy and festive recreation to a numerous and industrious population ; inspiring, at the same time, the pious devotee with the happy hope of a felicity beyond the grave. Had such always been the harmless exhibitions of priestcraft, the philosophical poet would never have had occasion to exclaim—

“Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.”

With every sentiment of human charity, the writer may be allowed to state from his own experience, that he found the water indicating at the supposed crisis of the miracle a somewhat greater, in place of a less temperature, on the day of the full moon than during the two preceding days. This, however, might have depended on the heat of the atmosphere being greater that day, and of course absorbing less caloric from the pool. Had it been otherwise, the fact would be easily explicable from the circumstances occurring at the baths, which must have considerable influence in modifying the heat ; for at certain times hundreds of men, women, and children throw up the water with their hands and pots, scattering it in every direction, and the refrigerating effect is accountable for on well-known principles.

It is also clear, that as the water is by many degrees hotter than the human body, and as the spring is not rapid, that the crowded and successive immersion of so many people acts as a powerful refrigerant, and speedily must bring down the temperature to the mean proportion betwixt the maximum above stated and the heat of the human blood, which in the healthy subject never exceeds 98° of Fahrenheit.

For the convenience of future travellers actuated by similar curiosity, it may be observed, that by halting at *Veal*, in a small garden belonging to the *Patél*, where there is a palm-thatched cottage, and plenty of shade on the outside of it for their cattle and followers, they will enjoy equally all the pleasure and variety of the *Jútrá*, free from the annoyance of the crowds, dust, and noise. The moderate ride of half an hour from thence furnishes an agreeable recreation in the morning and evening, and will be amply sufficient for satisfying their wishes, in all the particulars connected with the simple ceremonies above described.

N O T E.

As the subjoined version of the legend in the *Scanda Purán'a*, which describes the origin of the Hot Wells near Veval, taken from the Glossary appended to Dr. DRUMMOND's Illustrations of the Grammatical Parts of the Guzerattee, Mahratta, and English languages, under the article "*Oonæe* or *Oonay*," differs almost entirely from that contained in the preceding account by Dr. WHITE, it is deemed advisable to insert it.—G.C.H.

" The hot well, situated about fifty English miles S.E. of Surat in the territory of the Gaikevâd or Guicowar Raja, is called *Durekee Oonæe*. Regarding its origin and use, the following is an epitome framed by Sheva Bhatt of Surat from the Skunda Pooraw, to the truth of which the practice of the present age bears testimony; and it may be here stated that similar stories regarding all Indian antiquities of human art or wondrous works of nature, obtain credit.

" ' The Divine Ramchunder having set out on a tour through the earth to visit all its celebrated temples, came to the village Unnâvul, where there is a *Ling* (vivifying symbol of *Mahadéva*), close to which, perceiving a pure stream called *Umbeeka*, he determined to perform a grand religious ceremony. The officiating priests being nominated, they complained that the water of the river then was intensely cold, and begged his Highness to procure, if possible, warm water for them to bathe with, thereupon, his Highness, according to their desire, plunged his arrow of fire into the earth, whence instantly sprung up a quantity of warm water, which formed itself into a pan or bason, and became a place of great note. It has accordingly come to pass, that an annual *Jattra* or holy fair hath been held on the *Poorneem* of *Cheiter*, (*i.e.* on the day of the full moon in April) there, when whosoever as shall bathe in the said fountain, and distribute in charity (alms to needy objects), and feast Brahmins, and offer oblations to ancestors' manes, beseeching the Almighty, shall obtain forgiveness of their sins in former states.' "



№7 HAVING CHANGED HIS WAISTCLOTH HE OFFERS TO EAT THE SECOND SHEEP.

THE SHEEPTEATER

and his Guru or Preceptor;

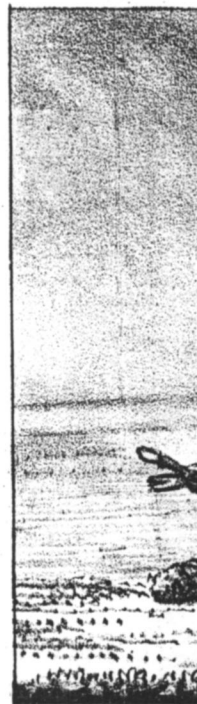
with representations of the various stages
of his Exhibition.

Drawn & Lithographed

from the original sketches made on the spot



№2. HAVING THROWN



№4. HAVING REMOVED THE



Nº 2. HAVING THROWN THE SHEEP ON ITS BACK HE EXTENDS THE LIMB'S PREPARATORY TO Nº 3.



Nº 4. HAVING REMOVED THE INTESTINES & HE BURIES HIS HEAD IN THE BODY TO DRINK THE BLOOD COLLECTED





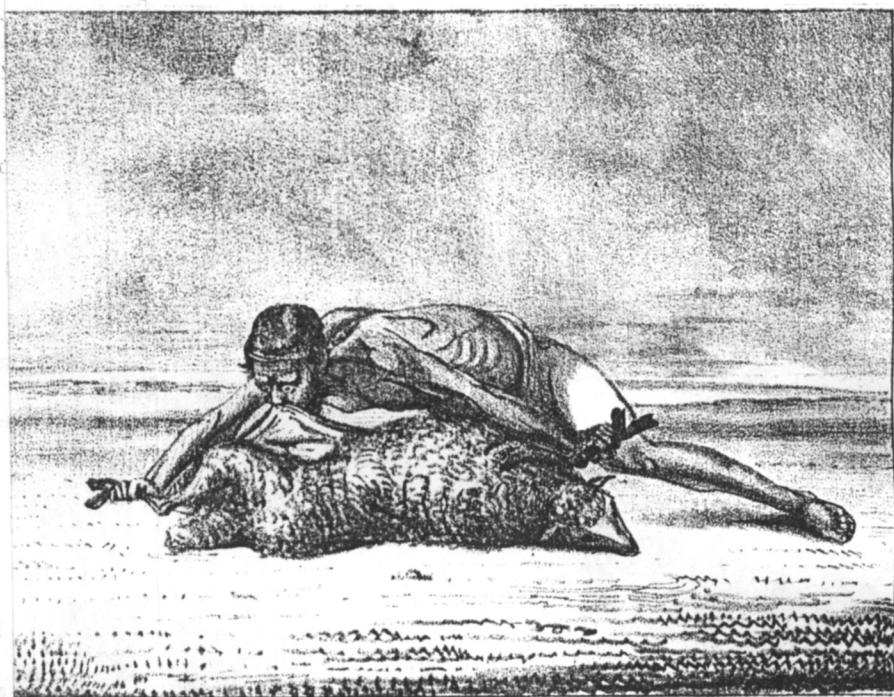
THE LIMB'S PREPARATORY TO N°3.



BY TO DRINK THE BLOOD COLLECTED



N°1. LIFTING THE SHEEP FROM THE GROUND WITH HIS TEETH ONLY.



N°3. RIPPING THE ANIMAL OPEN FROM FLANK TO THE BREAST.





Nº 7. HAVING CHANGED HIS WAISTCLOTH HE OFFERS TO EAT THE SECOND SHEEP.

THE SHEEP EATER and his Guru or Preceptor;

*with representations of the various stages
of his Exhibition.*

Drawn & Lithographed

from the original sketches made on the spot

FOR

Major General Hardwicke,
the 5th of March 1797;

and presented by him to the

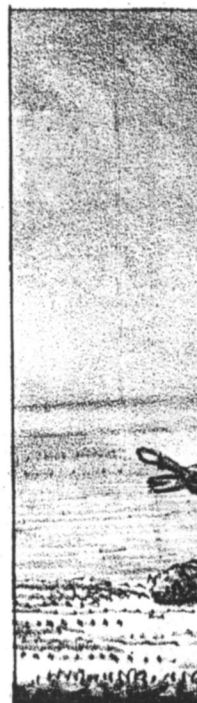
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY
of
GREAT BRITAIN (AND) IRELAND.

After Han Kina Drawn & Lith.

Printed by Graft & Jacob.



Nº 2. HAVING THROWN



Nº 4. HAVING REMOVED THE



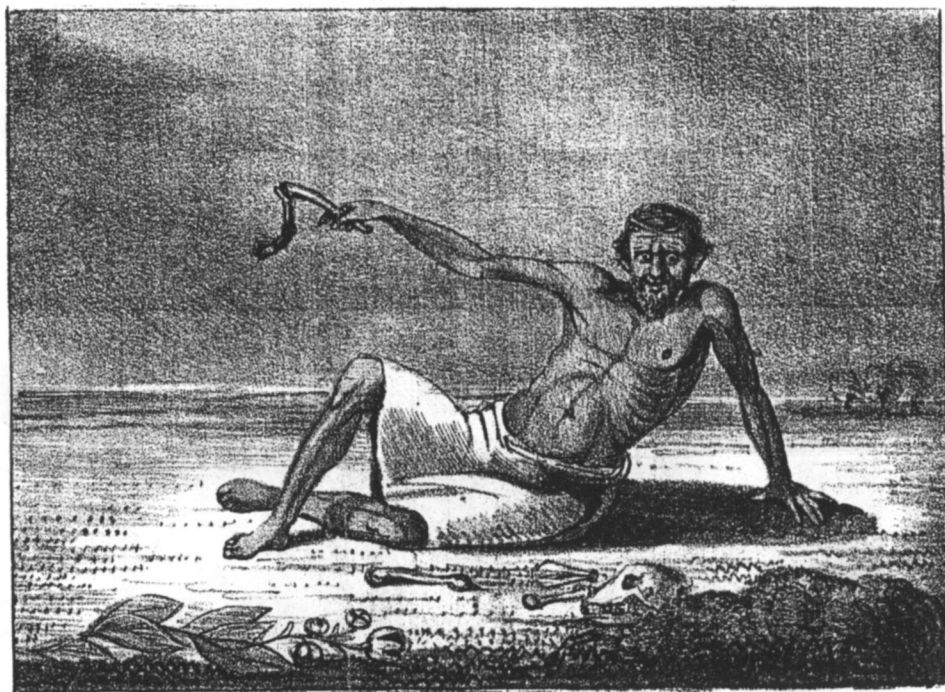
Nº 6. HAVING D



№ 2. HAVING THROWN THE SHEEP ON ITS BACK HE EXTENDS THE LIMBS PREPARATORY TO № 3.



№ 4. HAVING REMOVED THE INTESTINES & HE BURIES HIS HEAD IN THE BODY TO DRINK THE BLOOD COLLECTED



№ 6. HAVING DEVoured EVERY PORTION OF FLESH, HE CHEWS THE PLANT MADAR



SECOND SHEEP.

ER

col;

ges

ot

e,

Y

ND.

Printed by Graf & Schab.



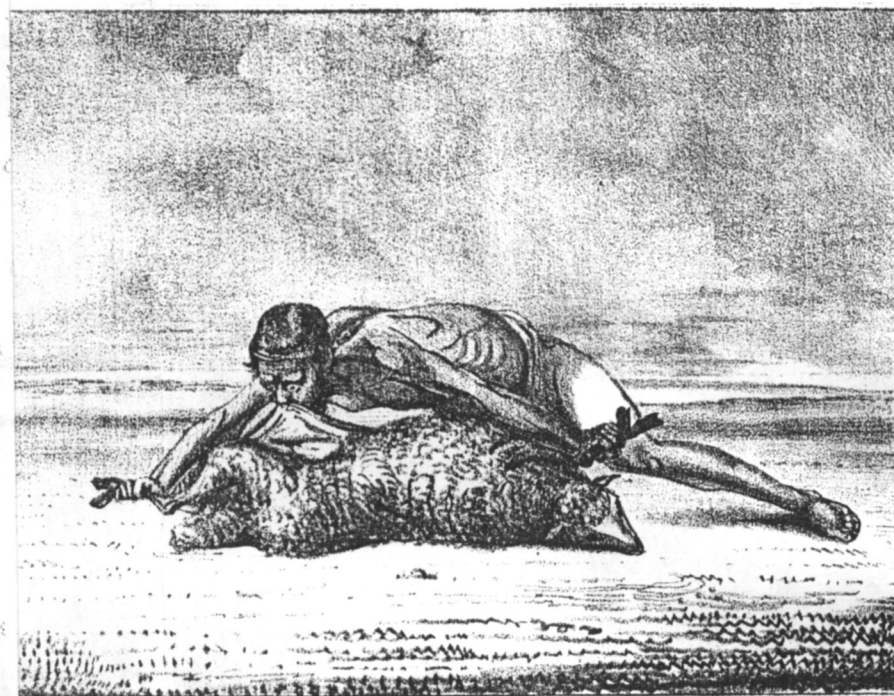
THE LIMBS PREPARATORY TO N°3.



N°1. LIFTING THE SHEEP FROM THE GROUND WITH HIS TEETH ONLY.



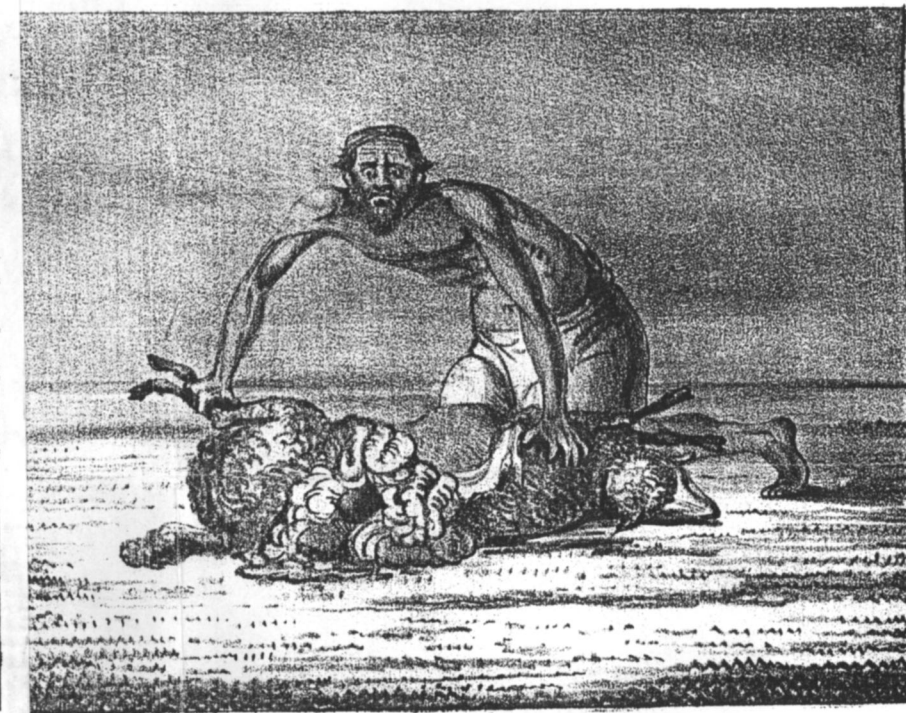
BY TO DRINK THE BLOOD COLLECTED



N°3. RIPPING THE ANIMAL OPEN FROM FLANK TO THE BREAST.



S THE PLANT MADAR



N°5. EXHIBITING HIS FACE AFTER HIS SANGUINARY DRAUGHT.